



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

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Part	Section	Subject	Policy No.	Review Date
Inmate Programs	Mail	Inmate Mail	5.4.1	
ACA Standards	3-ALDF: 5D-01 Inmate Correspondence; 5D-02 Inmate Bears Mailing Cost; 5D-03 Indigent Inmates Receive Postage Allowance; 5D-04 Inmate Access to Publication; 5D-05 Inmate Mail May be Opened and Inspected for Contraband; 3-ALDF-5D-06 Inmates are Permitted to Send Sealed Letters to Persons and Organizations; 3-ALDF-5D-07 Inmate Letters and Packages are Inspected to Intercept Cash and Contraband; 3-ALDF-5D-08 Inmate Letters and Packages are Held no More than 24 and 48 Hours Respectively			
Consent Decree	Paragraph 54 Develop Facility Policies and Procedures			

I. PURPOSE

To establish guidelines and procedures relevant to inmate mail, both incoming and outgoing.

II. POLICY

The Department of Corrections (DOC) values a correspondence program through the mail system to maintain ties with family members, friends, legal counsels, courts and politicians. Inmates/detainees are encouraged to keep in touch with society through mail system.

III. PROCEDURES**A. Inmate Correspondence**

Inmates/detainees are encouraged to main community ties with family members and personal friends.

1. Outgoing Mail

- a. Inmates/detainees are allowed to send mail every week from Monday through Friday.
- b. The inmate/detainee that pays for the mailing costs has no limit on the volume of mail send, length, content, or source of mail or publication, except where there is reasonable belief that limitation is necessary to protect the public safety or facility order and security.

- c. Inmate/detainee business mail will be limited to two (2) per week unless approved by the Director and/or Commissioner of Corrections.
2. Inmates will give their unsealed envelopes to the Housing Unit Officer to be inspected for compliance with the mail rules and regulations.
3. Envelopes may not contain bulky items, if so it will be returned to the sender.
4. The outgoing mail must have the following on the envelop:
 - a. Name of the inmate/detainee.
 - b. DOC complete address.
 - c. Address of the receiver of the mail.
 - d. Appropriate number of stamps.
 - e. Privilege mail such as attorney and court will be label "Privileged Mail" on the back of the envelop.
 - f. Outgoing mail without the proper information will be returned to the inmate/detainee.
5. The Housing Unit Officer will inspect in front of the inmate/detainee the letter and the envelop for contraband. When it is determined that there is no contraband, the letter will be accepted unsealed.
6. The Housing Unit Officer will make a written entry on the housing unit logbook the date letter was received and the name of the inmate. The Housing Unit Officer will inform the Security Officer that there is mail to be picked-up from the housing unit. When the mail is picked-up, the Housing Unit Officer will make an entry on the housing unit logbook the name of the officer that picked-up the mail, date and time.

B. Incoming Mail

1. Inmates/detainees are allowed to keep in-coming mails provided it can be stored in the bin along with other authorized items. Inmates/detainees will be required to destroy or send home excess mail for fire safety reasons.
2. Letters will not be posted on walls or any other areas within the inmate/detainee's sleeping area.

C. In-House Mail

1. Inmate/detainee to inmate/detainee mail within the facility is not permitted, unless approved by the Director of Corrections.
2. No officers will exchange inmate/detainee to inmate/detainee mail without prior approval from the Director of Corrections. Anyone caught committing this offense will be dealt with in an appropriate manner.

D. Security Officer Responsibilities

1. The Security Officer will sort all in-coming mails by separating inmate mail from Department of Corrections (DOC) mail.
2. The Security Officer will open all inmate/detainee mail to check for contraband and/or weapons. Inmate/detainee mails may be read to determine whether the inmate/detainee is involved in criminal activity and/or concerns relating to safety and security of the prison facility. This will be done in the presence of the inmate.
3. The Security officer will use the Inmate/Detainee cell assignment to determine housing assignment of inmates/detainees receiving mail and write it on the envelope for sorting by housing unit and delivery.
4. When inmate/detainee mails are sorted, the Security Officer will deliver the mails to the Housing Unit Officer at the appropriate housing unit.
5. The Security Officer will ensure that all inmate/detainee mails received during the week is delivered within 24 hours from the time it was received except for weekends and holidays. Packages will be delivered to the inmate/detainee within 48 hours. Delivery of outgoing mails and packages to the post office is the same.
6. The Security Officer will read and inspect all inmates/detainees out-going and in-coming mail to ensure that no contraband, cash and the contents of the letter does not raise safety and security concerns for the prison facility.
7. The Security Officer may inspect "Privileged Mail" for contraband, but should not read the contents of the privilege communication.
8. The Director of Corrections will be inform immediately on any safety and security concerns relating to inmate/detainee mail.
9. Items received through the mail that are not allowed in the facility will be returned to sender. If the sender cannot be determined then the items will be added to the inmate/detainee's property, provide the items are authorized items. Inmate/detainees will be notified about the item that was received.
10. Incoming mail for inmates/detainees no longer in custody without a return address will remain with the Security Officer. Efforts will be made to locate the released inmate/detainee. If unable to be located, the mail will be destroyed and documented within 30 days.

E. Publications

1. Inmates/detainees are authorized to receive publications provided the publication does not raise issues relating to the safety and security of the prison.

2. The Security Officer will review all publications received and will make a determination whether the publication has safety and security implication. When safety and security issues are discovered, the Security Officer will inform the Director of Corrections. A determination will be made whether the publication will be given to the inmate/detainee.

3. When a publication is denied, the following procedures will be followed:

- a. A written letter will be sent to the inmate/detainee that is to receive the publication stating the reasons for denying the delivery of the publication. A copy of the letter shall be sent to the publisher of the publication also.
- b. The letter will also state that the inmate/detainee has the right to appeal the reasons for denial within 5 days after receipt of the letter stating the reasons why the publication should not be denied.
- c. The inmate/detainee appeal should be resolved. If not resolved, inmate/detainee has the right to seek judicial review.

F. Indigent Inmates/Detainees

1. Upon a determination that the inmates/detainees are indigent, the DOC will provide the following:

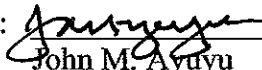
- a. Writing tablet and pen or pencil.
- b. Envelop with the appropriate number of stamps.
- c. Inmates/detainees are allowed to send two (2) letters per week to family and friends.
- d. Inmates/detainees must pay for letters to be sent to politicians, attorneys, court, and other organizations

G. Letter to Specified Persons and Organizations

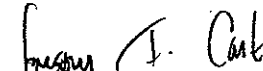
1. Inmates/detainees may send sealed letters to the following class of persons and organizations:

- a. Courts
- b. Counsel
- c. Officials of confining authority
- d. Government Secretary, Commissioners and Directors
- e. Administrators of grievance systems
- f. Members of the parole board
- g. Probation

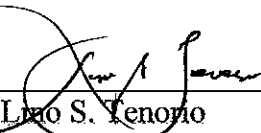
2. Mail to inmates/detainees from the above class of persons and organizations may be opened only to inspect for contraband and only in the presence of the inmate/detainee unless waived in writing by the inmate/detainee.

Prepared By: 
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10-24-07
Date

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Director of Corrections

10/24/07
Date

Approved By: 
Lino S. Tenorio
Commissioner of Corrections

10/26/07
Date

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